

Arthur J. Hedge Jr., head of environmental health and safety, is part of a rare I.B.M. return to centralization.

Managing

Giving the Environment Teeth

The idea is to get a top official who won't put production ahead of pollution concerns.

By CLAUDIA H. DEUTSCH

AST summer, the International Business Machines Corporation took a giant step backward — on purpose.

Years earlier, it had decentralized responsibility for environmental matters. Then, on July 1, it appointed Arthur J. Hedge Jr., a corporate officer who had run the real estate and construction departments, to the new job of vice president of environmental health and safety. It gave him a staff of roughly 30 people culled from such disparate depart-

our environmental efforts, and to send a clear signal that management cares about the environment," Mr. Hedge said.

I.B.M. is one of many companies that are upgrading the size, scope and status of their headquarters' environmental staffs. "Companies want people who can find the common thrust between technological, legal and public relations needs," said Bruce Piasecki, associate professor of environmental management at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.

They also want people who won't be cowed by plant managers who are more concerned with production than pollution. "Environmental people who report to someone above the plant manager are immune to politics," said William Alford, a New York recruiter who specializes in environmental jobs.

There are many reasons this is happening now. Companies still want to push decision-making as far down the line as possible. But they also want corporate-wide pollution control programs. They want environmental monitoring mechanisms that insurance un-

of nationwide environmental activism.

"The public has upped the ante, so we've upped the environmental function's clout," said Bruce W. Karrh, the Du Pont Company's vice president of safety, health and environmental affairs. Indeed, since 1987, Du Pont has increased the number of environmental jobs at Wilmington, Del., headquarters to 11 from 3, installed a more formal environmental audit process and tightened the criteria for joining the environmental staff.

Environment has a higher profile around the Polaroid Corporation's Cambridge, Mass., headquarters, too. Four years ago, Polaroid added a senior manager in manufacturing to control generation of toxic waste, and another in research, to see that new processes are environmentally sound. A few months ago, it added a senior marketing person to see that Polaroid products and packages do not cause a solid-waste problem.

"What we are doing is incorporating environmental issues into the management system," said Harry Fatkin, Polaroid's director